

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Unemployment rates decline in region and state

Five of the state's eleven metropolitan statistical areas, including Eau Claire-Chippewa, reported no change in seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in July. Five reported a reduction in unemployment and one showed an increase. The State of Wisconsin seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined in July to 4.7 percent from 4.9 percent in June.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in July in the Eau Claire-Chippewa area remained at 4.8 percent, following a revision upward of June's preliminary rate. Not adjusted the metro rate declined from 4.8 percent in June to 4.2 percent in July.

All nine of the counties in West Central Wisconsin were among the 66 counties in the state that reported a drop in unemployment rate from June to July. Only two counties, however, Clark and Polk, had unemployment rates lower than one year ago. The unemployment rate in Clark County in July was 4.7 percent, down from 6.5 percent last July while in Polk the current rate was 5.2 percent, down from 5.3 percent one year ago.

In Barron County the July unemployment rate was 4.4 percent, in Dunn it was 3.5 percent, in Pepin the rate was 5.4 percent, in Pierce it was 4.3 percent and in St. Croix, the unemployment rate was 6.1 percent, the highest rate in the region. Proximity to the twin cities and manufacturing reductions produced high unemployment rates in the county since the beginning of the year.

Unemployment rates throughout the region continue to drop, however, as we head closer to the dog days of summer. In spite of the weakness in manufacturing, total employment continues to increase.

In July, the total number of workers in the Eau Claire metro area (not seasonally adjusted) was 82,300, over 1,000 greater than last July. Every county in the region reported an increase in workers over the last twelve

months. The total number of workers in the rural counties of the region (excluding the metro area) climbed to 141,100, roughly 1,200 more than last July.

In spite of the increase in jobs, unemployment rates remain higher than a year ago in most of the counties. Bolstered by memories of a more prosperous job market last spring, graduating students and summer-time job seekers entered the labor market seeking work. This year, however, fewer of them have been successful in finding a job and have only added to the number of unemployed residents laid off from local employers.

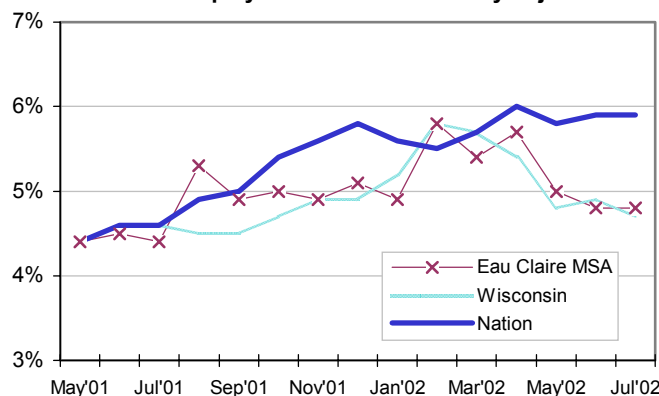
While a few did find work, employment increased in Eau Claire, Chippewa, Barron, Clark and St. Croix counties, many did not and dropped out of the labor market, if not permanently at least they stopped looking for work during the days following the holiday. No doubt there will be a renewed interest in job search activities as new opportunities become available in the area. A few recent announcements, including the opening of the Stanley prison and TNT Logistics in Menomonie should rekindle interest among job seekers.

That said, some job seekers did find employment in July with local employers, even though many of those jobs were seasonal. Manufacturing employment increased in Barron and St. Croix counties as vegetable processing got underway

and construction workers continued to find jobs in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties.

Also of seasonal note is the reduction in jobs with government agencies that began in June and continued into July. Nearly 3,500 jobs were lost in government in July but most of them were seasonal reductions that occurred with state and local schools. Many workers not on twelve-month contracts were laid off during the summer months. They include kitchen workers, maintenance

Unemployment Rates-Seasonally adjusted



	May'01	Jun'01	Jul'01	May'02	Jun'02	Jul'02
Eau Claire MSA	4.4%	4.5%	4.4%	5.0%	4.8%	4.8%
Wisconsin	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	4.8%	4.9%	4.7%
Nation	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	5.8%	5.9%	5.9%

crews, office assistants, bus drivers, and teacher aides.

Employment trends continue to follow seasonal patterns set over the last decade. The exception remains in manufacturing where employment levels in most of the nine counties are lower than last year. The Eau Claire metro area and St. Croix County stand out in the loss of manufacturing employment. While the metro area has been wrestling with the decline since 1999 when there were nearly 14,000 production jobs, the struggle in St. Croix County began last summer.

The decline in production jobs is the primary reason that the number of unemployment compensation claims remains high.

The number of new claims filed for unemployment benefits declined from mid-June to mid-July. While continued claims remain higher than last year, initial claims for benefits are declining. A running average of the last four weeks, ending with the last week available (week ending August 10, 2002), shows there were 197 fewer initial claims for unemployment benefits filed in the West Central region.

July 2002 Estimates									
Not seasonally adjusted	Wisconsin	EC MSA	Barron	Clark	Dunn	Pepin	Pierce	Polk	St.Croix
Civilian Labor Force*	3,117,000	85,800	24,700	16,300	22,000	3,200	21,900	23,800	36,300
Employed	2,970,600	82,300	23,600	15,600	21,200	3,000	20,900	22,600	34,100
Unemployed	146,400	3,600	1,100	800	800	200	900	1,200	2,200
Unemployment rate(%)	4.7%	4.2%	4.4%	4.7%	3.5%	5.4%	4.3%	5.2%	6.1%
Total jobs, all industries**	2,847,300	76,700	21,700	10,100	15,000	2,100	10,300	15,100	28,300
Construction & Mining	139,110	4,550	930	720	730	180	520	860	1,770
Manufacturing	573,550	11,350	6,820	3,120	2,370	150	1,360	4,600	7,040
Transportation & Public Util.	129,500	3,310	670	420	520	90	520	480	1,060
Wholesale Trade	139,620	3,340	600	530	640	260	230	410	700
Retail Trade	512,880	17,270	4,280	1,320	3,990	500	2,320	2,830	6,430
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	154,660	2,910	420	240	440	70	330	480	1,010
Services	810,010	23,100	3,960	1,710	2,830	410	2,240	3,270	7,030
Government	388,000	10,850	4,050	2,040	3,480	470	2,810	2,130	3,240
Change from previous month									
Civilian Labor Force*	3,300	-100	-100	0	-600	-100	0	-800	0
Employed	16,100	500	100	200	-500	0	0	-600	100
Unemployed	-12,800	-600	-200	-100	-100	0	-100	-100	-100
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.4%	-0.7%	-0.7%	-0.9%	-0.4%	-0.7%	-0.4%	-0.3%	-0.2%
Total jobs, all industries**	-24,000	-600	-400	-100	-700	-100	-600	-700	-300
Construction & Mining	2,300	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	-20	-20	200	-20	30	0	-10	-20	220
Transportation & Public Util.	-3,060	-40	-10	0	-10	-20	0	-10	-30
Wholesale Trade	-150	20	-20	-20	0	0	20	10	-10
Retail Trade	1,360	-330	-70	10	-50	0	-100	-50	-100
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	770	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-30
Services	3,310	80	30	-10	-10	10	20	-40	70
Government	-28,610	-470	-530	-90	-680	-70	-550	-600	-480
Change from one year ago									
Civilian Labor Force*	56,400	1,500	400	-300	300	0	400	100	1,200
Employed	50,500	1,200	300	0	200	0	200	200	400
Unemployed	5,800	300	100	-300	100	0	100	0	800
Unemployment rate(%)	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	-1.8%	0.2%	1.3%	0.5%	-0.1%	2.2%
Total jobs, all industries**	12,000	200	300	200	100	0	100	0	700
Construction & Mining	1,600	600	-100	100	100	0	100	0	200
Manufacturing	-14,790	-990	-70	-20	20	-10	20	-60	-330
Transportation & Public Util.	-2,120	-40	30	30	0	0	-20	0	-10
Wholesale Trade	300	110	10	-30	0	-10	-30	10	60
Retail Trade	4,000	-210	-40	30	20	10	60	50	430
Finance,Insurance,Real Estate	2,500	130	-10	-10	20	0	0	20	80
Services	19,940	530	120	-10	40	0	0	110	240
Government	630	90	330	100	-80	0	-20	-180	30

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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